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# Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

*Provisional*

## 4424th meeting

Wednesday, 21 November 2001, 10.30 a.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Miss Durrant | (Jamaica) |
| *Members:* | Bangladesh | Mr. Chowdhury |
| | China | Mr. Wang Yingfan |
| | Colombia | Mr. Valdivieso |
| | France | Mr. Doutriaux |
| | Ireland | Mr. Corr |
| | Mali | Mr. Kassé |
| | Mauritius | Mr. Koonjul |
| | Norway | Mr. Brattskar |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Karev |
| | Singapore | Mr. Mahbubani |
| | Tunisia | Mr. Mejdoub |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Kuchinsky |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Eldon |
| | United States of America | Mr. Cunningham |

## Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict.

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01-65181 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Protection of civilians in armed conflict**

**The President**: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Oshima to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Members of the Council will be aware that this meeting is taking place against the background of the letter dated 21 June 2001 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2001/614), following the open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict held on 23 April 2001. In that letter, the members of the Council indicated that they would welcome a briefing by the Secretariat on the status of the initiatives outlined in the letter.

I therefore give Mr. Oshima the floor.

**Mr. Oshima:** I would like to thank you, Madam President, and the members of the Council for inviting me to brief the Council on the implementation plan for the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Despite the growing attention paid, including in the media recently, to the fate of civilians caught in armed conflict, the reality faced by millions of civilians around the world is a grim one. The situation in Afghanistan, for example, highlights many of the issues and challenges addressed in the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, such as the issue of humanitarian access to vulnerable populations; the special protection needs of women and children; safety, protection and security in camps for internally displaced persons; engagement with armed groups for access negotiations; civil and military relations in the delivery of humanitarian aid; separation of civilians and combatants in camps for internally displaced persons and refugees; and the security and safety of humanitarian personnel. These and other issues dealt with in the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict are, in fact, the daily problems faced in the situation of Afghanistan today.

The Secretary-General's two reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, submitted to the Council in September 1999 and March 2001, contain 54 recommendations with respect to these and other, related problems. In a letter of June 2001, the President of the Council suggested to the Secretary-General several initiatives to move these recommendations into action.

The initiatives suggested cover three main areas. The first involves a reorganization of those 54 recommendations by the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Security Council, into different groups, with the aim of clarifying responsibilities, enhancing cooperation and facilitating implementation; I would like to refer to this reorganization of work, for convenience's sake, as a road map. Secondly, the Secretariat was asked to draft an aide-mémoire to facilitate consideration by the Council of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in the design and planning of peacekeeping mandates. Thirdly, the Council encouraged the Secretary-General to further ensure closer cooperation between my Office — the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) — and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the protection of civilians.

The Secretary-General welcomes the opportunity to develop this implementation plan. I am pleased to report this morning that all the suggestions mentioned are in various stages of development.

Let me elaborate on the progress made so far on the three proposed initiatives.

First, the aim in developing the road map is to reorganize the Secretary-General's recommendations

into different themes, then identify responsible institutions for implementation and define the necessary steps, including the steps for cooperation and coordination. For this purpose, my Office, in consultation with interested Member States and various agencies, is in the process of creating a matrix, or implementation chart, to elaborate on needed action for the implementation of the recommendations. We intend to include the final outcome in a comprehensive report to be submitted to the Council in November 2002. The matrix will list thematically the recommendations and relevant provisions contained in resolutions 1265 (1999) and 1296 (2000) while, of course, identifying the responsible institutions, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, Member States, the Secretariat and others, such as regional organizations, the private sector and civil society. We hope that this exercise will eventually contribute to enhancing the implementation of the recommendations at the legislative, executive and operational levels.

To assist in the preparation of the road map, my Office has organized thus far three workshops, in which interested Member States, the Secretariat, agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, non-governmental organizations and various experts have participated. In this connection, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Norway for providing the necessary financial support to hold these workshops.

I would like to highlight some of the points raised during the discussions in the workshops.

Concerning legal protection, for example, the participants called for greater specificity with regard to State obligations under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights laws. It was suggested that Member States could exchange information about their best practices to provide guidance for other States and to reinforce the success of initiatives. Participants called upon the United Nations to provide capacity-building assistance in States where implementation and enforcement capacity is inadequate. High priority was attached to establishing the International Criminal Court and moving away from ad hoc tribunals while bolstering national justice systems. Funding in this regard was identified as a major problem in post-conflict situations in which the national justice system has collapsed. More secure funding from assessed contributions was suggested as a solution.

On the issue of internally displaced persons, the importance of operationalizing the guiding principles concerning internally displaced persons through training, mainstreaming and assistance programmes was stressed in the course of the discussion. The effective implementation of these programmes will, again, require increased donor support. The frequent lack of funds often results in lost opportunities and dangerous setbacks.

As regards peacekeeping, the workshops noted that so far, in most instances, peacekeeping mandates do not include the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Many participants cited insufficient political will as one of the reasons. It was widely agreed that mission planning for peacekeeping operations would benefit from the perspectives of humanitarian workers, as they have often been on the ground for years and could contribute essential information and analysis regarding the protection of civilians. To change the realities on the ground, sometimes peacekeeping operations need robust mandates from the Security Council.

These are some of the points highlighted in the course of the workshops.

This leads me to my second point: the issue of the aide-memoire process. This is meant to be a checklist to ensure that the issues of protection of civilians are systematically taken into consideration in establishing, changing or closing peacekeeping mandates.

Working closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and humanitarian and human rights agencies, my Office has prepared a list of key issues to be considered by the Council. The list is currently being shared informally with interested Member States for comment. We would like to propose that a half-day, expert-level discussion with members of the Council be organized to review the aide-memoire sometime next year, perhaps in January or February.

I would like to move on to the third initiative, which concerns steps to ensure closer coordination between my Office, OCHA, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretary-General welcomes the opportunity to develop a cross-cutting team composed of representatives from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and OCHA in order to facilitate due consideration of issues related to the protection of civilians in the design, planning and

implementation of peacekeeping operations. To that end, my Office is developing a strategic paper, which will be brought to the attention of the members of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for further development and action.

While the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with Governments, it is important that we reach beyond traditional lines and create synergies between a wide range of actors. This will require the commitment and cooperation of Member States, regional organizations, international and domestic non-governmental organizations, the media, the private sector and academia.

My Office is committed to continuing in close consultation with the Council to develop an implementation road map and the aide-memoire. We will also seize the opportunity to establish a cross-cutting mechanism between OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. I look forward to coming back to the Council in a few months with additional information on the status of these initiatives.

**The President**: I thank Mr. Oshima for his briefing on the initiatives taken in follow-up to the letter from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General on 21 June 2001.

As the purpose of this meeting was to hear the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General, there is no list of speakers for this meeting. I would therefore invite those members who have questions to address to Mr. Oshima to so indicate.

**Mr. Kuchinsky** (Ukraine): I would like to thank through you, Madam President, Under-Secretary-General Kenzo Oshima for his succinct yet informative briefing on the status of implementation of the initiatives set out in the letter of the President of the Council of 21 June 2001.

Without repeating our position on the topic of civilians in armed conflict — I think that yesterday's debate covered many of the issues pertaining to this important problem in general — I wish to ask Mr. Oshima a few questions.

First, we would appreciate it if Mr. Oshima could provide us with an update on the issue of the development of a manual of best practices for engagement with armed groups. We should recognize that when it comes to non-State actors and the problem of their engagement in a dialogue, there is probably no satisfactory solution at the moment, especially in situations where armed groups operate not as an organized military force with clear political objectives, but rather as gangs of criminals profiting from the lack of security and general instability. As far as I know, an effort has already been made to address this issue in some form or another. What, in fact, has been done in this regard by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee?

My second question concerns the identification of armed elements and their separation from civilians in refugee camps and camps for internally displaced persons. I recognize that perhaps this question would be better addressed to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Still, I would like to know if you have some information and if you could tell us whether anything is being done in this direction, and whether there have been criteria or procedures developed and applied for this purpose.

**Mr. Mahbubani** (Singapore): I join Ambassador Kuchinsky in thanking Mr. Oshima for his briefing. Madam President, you have told us that in this meeting we will not make any statements but have a question-and-answer session. In that spirit, I would like to make three points — my questions will be rolled into three points.

The first point is that, as I was reading very quickly the statement that I gave on this subject in April of this year, I recalled that I quoted paragraph 67 of the Secretary-General's report, which said as follows:

> "Some 18 months have passed since I submitted my first report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. I regret to note that only a few of its 40 recommendations are so far being implemented." (*S/2001/331, para. 67*)

This is a statement the Secretary-General made earlier this year. Has the situation improved since then in terms of the actual implementation of the recommendations? I make this point because the trouble that we have on this issue is that we produce thousands of words on the protection of civilians, the protection of children and the protection of women. But it is very difficult for us to find out whether or not these words actually make a difference in terms of deeds on the ground. The most specific question I have is, when we next meet to review this subject, can we

get some kind of concrete information on what I call "trend lines"? Are we moving towards a situation in general where there is greater protection for civilians in armed conflict or — if we look at the statistics and what is happening in actual conflicts, whether in Sierra Leone, Angola, Afghanistan or wherever — are more civilians really being harmed, injured or killed? What is the trend line? I think we need to have that the next time we meet because unless we have this data, we have no way of measuring whether or not our words are having any impact. I hope that Mr. Oshima will enlighten us as to whether it is reasonable or unreasonable to request more specific indicators when we next discuss this issue.

My second point is related to the first point. Yesterday, we had a very good discussion on the protection of children in armed conflict. We have had discussions on women and peace and security. We have talked about conflict prevention. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that there are common points made in each of these debates. In a sense, we are repeating points on the protection of children and on the protection of civilians. Can we do something useful and constructive — try to cluster these recommendations that we have so that we do not have to repeat them four times, at every debate? There would also be some degree of cost-saving because perhaps we do not need four different debates, four different reports and four different discussions. Frankly, from the point of view of the smaller Missions to the United Nations, we do not have to maintain four different files that basically repeat the same points on these issues. So, in the process of preparing the aide-memoire or preparing the reports or in the workshops, I wonder if we can see whether there are some common traits that we can pull together and then say that it is very clear that there are some common themes that come out in all these reports. If this can be provided to us, it would enhance our work enormously, especially when we review this in November 2002, as Mr. Oshima said.

My third point concerns the whole issue of non-State actors. Yesterday we heard a very moving statement from a young boy from Sierra Leone named Alhaji Babah Sawaneh. Listening to him, it is very clear that for someone like him there was no choice. Basically, he was abducted while going to visit some relatives and conscripted into a force, and he said he had to do terrible things. He had to cut limbs, to burn houses and to kill people. These were his own words.

Clearly, the norms that we are creating are intended to change the behaviour of non-State actors like these. It is one thing to say we should look at best practices among nation-States, to carry them forward and say "I will copy nation-State access policies". But when it comes to non-State actors, how do you change their behaviour or their norms?

Quite frankly, I wonder whether we have reflected enough on this issue, and I wonder whether Mr. Oshima has addressed it in the workshops. And, frankly, if we do want to change the behaviour of such groups, we may have to consider in some ways what I call more drastic solutions, some of which have been discussed in this Council. For example, to quote the then Foreign Minister Axworthy of Canada, who spoke last year,

> "the protection of civilians requires strengthening our disposition to intervene by force if necessary". (S/PV.4127, p. 24)

In the final analysis, this whole question of humanitarian intervention comes in. Has this ever flowed into any of the discussions on the protection of civilians, or is it considered taboo or out of the range of our discussions? Similarly, when it comes to reaching out to young people like Alhaji Babah Sawaneh, we also have to look at things such as the root causes: what is it that creates such conflicts, what creates such young people, and what drives them to such desperation? Is there some kind of discussion along these lines in the discussions that the various agencies are having?

A key point I wish to emphasize is that in all our discussions on this subject I hope we will not just concentrate on abstract points and principles but that we will look at the realities on the ground in conflicts existing today. We should ask ourselves how many of the points we are making will apply to those situations, and how civilians are being protected or are not being protected by the words we produce.

**Mr. Brattskar** (Norway): Norway regards the protection of civilians as an important issue on the Security Council's agenda. I would like, through you, Madam President, to thank Mr. Oshima for briefing us today. We would have hoped that the work would have proceeded somewhat further than seems to be the case,

but we do understand that the particular challenges over the last couple of months have made it necessary to give priority to more immediate challenges.

We do hope and trust, however, that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will be able to ensure further progress in the weeks and months ahead, and we are encouraged by the suggestions that informal discussions be organized on a more substantial basis early next year. I look forward to a briefing on further progress as soon as feasible thereafter.

At this stage I would like to ask Mr. Oshima, through you, Madam President, to elaborate somewhat on the following two questions. First, the current situation in Afghanistan represents a number of challenges with regard to protection of civilians. It has also struck many of us that the recommendations of the Secretary-General are highly relevant in ensuring an adequate international response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. To what extent is the United Nations dealing with the Afghanistan situation, making use of the framework being established for the protection of civilians through the reports to the Security Council and the Council's increased attention to these aspects of its work?

My second question is related to the preparation of the aide-memoire referred to in Mr. Oshima's briefing and in the letter to the Secretary-General. In our view, this aide-memoire should be short, concise and comprehensive to increase its value as a practical reference guide for the Council. In addition to its resolutions on protection of civilians, the Council had also adopted resolutions on a number of other important issues, most recently the resolution on children and armed conflict adopted yesterday and the resolution on women, peace and security a couple of weeks ago. Is OCHA also taking into account the relevant provisions of these resolutions in preparing the aide-memoire to ensure the necessary comprehensive coverage?

**Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia)*(spoke in Spanish)*: I, too, would like to thank Mr. Oshima for the information he has given us on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. It seems to me that the Council has taken a wise decision in pausing, making an assessment and endeavouring to increase the efficiency of the way in which it addresses this item.

I wish to refer to one of the requests made by the Security Council President in his communication of 21 June, which was that several workshops be held on this topic. It was also suggested that one be held before the briefing. Mr. Oshima has told us that three workshops have already been held and that several United Nations agencies were invited, as were representatives from interested Governments, together with experts. He also announced that there would be a meeting of experts in January or February.

For this reason, I would like to ask Mr. Oshima how we can get invited to these workshops. It seems to me that, despite the Security Council communication and the expressions of interest that have been very clearly made — in the case of my delegation — as to interest in this topic, we have as yet not received an invitation to be able to take part in those deliberations. We think that the workshops are essential for involving Council members in the assessment of the Council's link to the topic, in particular with issues such as the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons, access by humanitarian personnel to vulnerable populations, the delivery of humanitarian assistance under secure conditions and, naturally, the protection of humanitarian personnel. So I might ask, how can we, the members of the Security Council, participate in those workshops, as requested in the communication?

Now then, there will be an assessment in one year. Mr. Oshima has told us about the work that has been done in these three areas, and, in this sense, we would like to ask that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or the Secretariat provide us, either now or in due course, with the schedule of the work plan, whether the format of the plan was foreseen during this year. Even if it is true that it is not going to be the object of direct Security Council activity, we indeed can begin to participate, to begin to be more closely connected to that work so that we can be better prepared when the time comes to take decisions after the November report.

**The President:** I will now give the floor to the next speaker, the representative of Ireland, and after that I will ask Mr. Oshima to answer the first set of questions.

**Mr. Corr** (Ireland): Like others, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Oshima for his briefing on the progress in the three areas outlined.

As a general point, I would say that Ireland, like the representative of Norway and others who have spoken, very much regards the protection of civilians in armed conflict as one of the more important issues on the Council's agenda. Therefore the approach we take to this issue in terms of institutional detail on making progress is one part of it. The other part, as Singapore quite rightly said, are the wider issues of the spirit and the sense of urgency in which we approach this. As the Under-Secretary-General said at the outset, it is hard to think of issues that are more important — including in the context of Afghanistan — in terms of humanitarian access, camps for internally displaced persons, engagement with armed groups, delivery of aid and so on.

I would like to speak briefly about the three issues. On the question of the re-organization of the recommendations into different groups, the workshops that have been held have clearly been a very useful idea. As Colombia has said, this is, I think, an issue where Council members could possibly participate. We would hope that even before the comprehensive report is issued in November 2002, it will be possible to come back to the Council with progress on the matrix and on the state of play, given the clear importance that this has in terms of the institutional structures within the United Nations on how to make progress in terms of the different issues there.

On the draft aide-memoire, the proposal for a half-day discussion — perhaps early next year — seems a very good one. As members of the Council, we would fully support that. We would also feel that the value of the aide-memoire should be in its relative simplicity. It should essentially be a checklist without too much complexity. We would therefore support its being developed very rapidly after the half-day discussion. Equally, we look forward to the strategy paper prepared by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations.

If I might, I would like to take up two questions. One arises from yesterday's meeting, which clearly showed significant linkages between the area of child protection and the issues we are considering here. I believe that Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno indicated in the Preparatory Committee for the special session of the General Assembly devoted to children that an informal inter-agency working group on the integration of child protection concerns into peace negotiations was being established and that this would take into account operational procedures being developed by OCHA in relation to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. There is a clear complementarity here, so I wonder how that working group is proceeding and developing in terms of those linkages.

The second point, which is a more indirect one, is the issue of access negotiations with parties to armed conflict. In his second report, the Secretary-General mentioned that he had requested the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to develop a manual for access negotiations and strategies, including benchmarks for the engagement and disengagement of aid agencies, and so on. Again, I would be interested to hear what progress has been made on that.

The final question, which is perhaps more abstract at this stage, is the recommendation about the media made by the Secretary-General in his report, which also relates to paragraph 18 of resolution 1296 (2000), on a mass-media component to peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General's report of course noted that no peacekeeping or peace-enforcement mission had yet been authorized in terms of, for example, closing down the assets of hate media. I wonder how the Under-Secretary-General sees the possibility for progress in that general area, given its importance.

**The President**: I now give the floor to Under-Secretary-General Kenzo Oshima.

**Mr. Oshima**: I would like, first of all, to express my appreciation for the great deal of interest in the progress that is being made in the work following the exchanges between the President of the Council and the Secretary-General as to how we proceed from now until November 2002, when we expect to submit a report to the Council on this important issue.

First, with regard to the question raised by the Ambassador of Ukraine concerning the preparation of a manual, an inter-agency process was initiated to address this matter. Agencies have agreed to produce a manual for United Nations humanitarian field staff that should incorporate best practices collected from the field and contain guidance on practical steps as to when, how and on what basis one should engage or disengage with armed groups. The group is also preparing a policy paper on this issue. The endorsement of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

will be sought for the manual and the policy paper before they are submitted to the Council for its consideration.

Contacts with armed groups should of course be based on core humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity to stop the suffering of innocent civilians and to allow a sustained humanitarian dialogue. Contacts with armed groups should not affect their legitimacy or the legitimacy of their claims. The concern over legitimizing armed groups must be balanced with the often urgent need to negotiate with those groups on access and the safety of personnel in order to take life-saving assistance to people in need.

Those are some of the core issues that the manual will try to address, drawing on the best practices that agencies and their partners in non-governmental organizations have collected over the years. Of course, we would like to share the manual with the members of the Council in an appropriate forum.

The Ambassador of Singapore raised the issue of quick implementation of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General, and wondered whether we are able to provide some trend lines. This is of course not an easy task, but we will try as much as possible to reflect that in our report to be submitted next November, not only in terms of the information but also with regard to any general trend that we may be able to establish. We shall try to determine where there has been progress or regress in addressing the relevant issues raised in connection with the protection of civilians.

Concerning possible overlap, there are issues connected with the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including small arms, conflict prevention, children in armed conflict, et cetera. There are a number of reports by the Secretary-General that separately raise the issue of civilian protection in connection to those sub-issues, if I may call them that. There are certain overlapping elements, but I think these processes are more complementary to each other. Indeed, these processes demonstrate a convergence of opinions on the critical issues.

On the practical level, in order to enhance the development of the road map, my Office has undertaken a review of relevant reports of the Secretary-General and Council resolutions relating to prevention, peacekeeping, sanctions, the issue of children, small arms issues and other matters. Identifying other implementation efforts will help fill any gaps and will enhance cooperation with other departments and agencies in order to facilitate implementation. But I do indeed recognize the need to try to establish some common threads that will need to be pulled together. We will try to make an effort to ensure that those common threads are developed and that they are adequately reflected in the report that we will submit in November 2002.

Turning to the problem mentioned by the representative of Colombia, I do not believe that invitations were extended to all members of the Council to the three workshops that have taken place so far. We envisage further workshops in the months ahead, and I would like to assure the members of the Council that invitations will be extended to future workshops. In addition, as I indicated, I hope that some time early next year an interface will take place with all members of the Council to address the issues under discussion, such as the road map, the development of a manual and other relevant issues. I would also like to make sure that work plans for between now and November 2002 are developed and that all members of the Council are duly informed of them.

Concerning a progress report on the matrix, as I mentioned in my remarks, that matter has been looked at by the Secretariat as a tool – as an implementation chart – to help members of the Council and other stakeholders to better address issues related to the protection of civilians in all its aspects. We will, of course, need some more time to complete that work, but in due course we would like to report to members of the Council on progress in an appropriate way. We very much look to the President of the Council for guidance in that regard.

Let me turn briefly to the issue of the separation of combatants from the civilian population in camps for internally displaced persons and in refugee camps. This, of course, is a problem which we often witness in many situations. In Afghanistan we certainly see this happening at the moment, and we also see it in various situations in other complex emergency situations in Africa and elsewhere. For example, in Afghanistan at the moment we see some indications of the militarization of camps for internally displaced persons; this is reported in Mazar-e-Sharif and in Herat. Apparently, there is intimidation of Pashtun internally displaced persons by Northern Alliance

factions, which leads to the introduction of military elements into such camps. Similar developments are reported also in some of the camps established in the border areas near Pakistan. The situation created there is so dangerous that access by humanitarian agencies to the camps to assist people in those facilities has been made risky and dangerous. At the moment, access is not assured.

Those kinds of problems do indeed exist; in each and every case, what the humanitarian agencies try to do is to address each case on its own merits, case by case, and see what they can do: what kind of practical arrangements can be made to allow access. But again, this often involves very difficult and delicate negotiations. Sometimes agencies are successful, other times they are not. The only thing I would like to say about these problems is that they involve very difficult negotiations in each and every case. For further practical information, I think this issue should really be addressed to the agencies that are actually engaged on the ground.

I hope I have answered most of the questions put to me.

**Mr. Eldon** (United Kingdom): I thank Kenzo Oshima for a very interesting and useful briefing. I think this meeting is indeed quite useful: this is a subject to which the United Kingdom attaches tremendous importance, and it is very important that work on it should go on. I will own up to Ambassador Valdivieso that I myself participated in one of the workshops, which I thought was a very useful occasion. It was a mix of just one or two – I think quite arbitrarily chosen – Member States, people with field experience, experts from the Secretariat, representatives of non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors. While I have absolutely no feelings of pride about having had a seat at the table, I think it would be a shame if the balance of those gatherings were distorted too much, because I think the workshop was a very useful melting-pot of ideas. I think we need more of them.

I would like to endorse the points made by Ambassador Mahbubani earlier on in the discussion. We need to design a robust normative framework that can help guide the practical work of the whole United Nations system, so that we really make an impact on the ground in terms of protecting civilians. Children really must be civilians. It is a sad fact of life that women very often are civilians in conflict situations, and so it makes an awful lot of sense to integrate the various strands of work by the Council in this general area into a sort of coherent whole.

At the same time, it is rather important that we should not drown in bureaucracy. For that reason, I endorse Kishore Mahbubani's remarks, too, about things that make a practical difference. In essence, what we need to do is to mainstream the protection of civilians into the work we do in dealing with conflict situations. I would therefore very much endorse, I think, the suggestion made by Ambassador Mahbubani and Ambassador Corr, that if we have another progress report later on, it would be rather good to have some practical examples of where this initiative has made a real difference in real situations involving conflict and civilians. I hope Under-Secretary-General Oshima will bear that in mind when he comes back to the Council.

I think the road map is a good idea, but to be useful, like aides-memoires, road maps have to be clear, straightforward and well set out, not overly complex. I have in mind here the annex to the "road map" document, which seemed to me to be a very clear set of indicators on what to do about the millennium development goals. My question to Under-Secretary-General Oshima is about the provision in the road map for benchmarking, because it is very important, I think, that we should have a way of measuring progress by the system as a whole. So I would be interested in having his comments on what measures are going to be included in this document so that we can make sure that the system is kept up to the mark.

I also very much agree with what Ambassador Mahbubani had to say about the importance of input from humanitarian actors into planning for peacekeeping operations. In a sense, it boils down to mainstreaming the humanitarian dimension into the way in which mandates are put together within the Secretariat. I would simply point out, though, that as we move towards approving operations that have a civilian protection dimension to them, we need to think very carefully about exactly what is meant by that, because it can often have quite a disproportionate effect on military planning. So we need to be extremely clear about what needs to be done in any given situation. I hope the aide-memoire will help tease some of that out.

Finally, on cross-cutting mechanisms, it is indubitably the case that the relationship between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) should be a case for priority attention. But I did not hear Under-Secretary-General Oshima say anything, for example, about the Department of Political Affairs or about the other parts of the United Nations system that have an extremely valid role to play in providing protection for civilian-related work in some of the situations with which the Council has to deal. Again, I do not want to suggest biting off more than it is possible to chew in one lump. But I would be grateful to have any indication from him about where the other parts of the system are going to fit in, because, as Ambassador Mahbubani said, and I strongly agree, we need to approach this in a holistic way. We have got to get the system working together and using synergy to the best effect.

**Mr. Doutriaux** (France)(*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Mr. Kenzo Oshima for the briefing he gave us on the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the important issue of protecting civilians in armed conflict.

With your permission, Madam President, I would like to pick up on a few points mentioned in the excellent letter prepared by Norway in response to the previous report of the Secretary-General.

We wish to refer to the question in paragraph 1 of the letter, which was also raised by Mr. Oshima, of reorganizing all activities of the United Nations, funds and programmes in the area of protecting civilians in armed conflict. This is an important matter. It was in this spirit that we, with the Council, drafted the resolution adopted yesterday on the protection of children in armed conflict. The resolution that we adopted yesterday included the reorganization of all activities of the United Nations and its Member States in this area. Perhaps, Mr. Oshima, we could think of the resolution that was adopted yesterday on the protection of children in armed conflict as a precedent for preparing a similar type of resolution or other text that would clarify our ideas about dividing responsibilities in the area of protecting civilians in armed conflict.

In paragraph 2 of the Norwegian letter — the letter from the President of the Security Council but drafted by Norway — we refer to the issue of cooperation between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the context of a peacekeeping mandate. As Ambassador Eldon mentioned a moment ago, it might also be useful to think about cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs when the conflict in question — I am thinking of Afghanistan because there is no mandate for a peacekeeping operation there — does not relate to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, but to the Department of Political Affairs. Obviously, as you yourself said, Mr. Oshima, there are serious problems in protecting civilians in the Afghan conflict, so this cooperation must definitely be expanded. It clearly already exists, but the cooperation between OCHA and the Department of Political Affairs should be restructured.

Next, in paragraph 3 of the letter, we refer to the checklist of questions concerning the modification and establishment of peacekeeping mandates. It is my understanding that Mr. Oshima is engaged in consultations with interested Member States on the question of the aide-memoire, the checklist of issues. I would like to tell you, Mr. Oshima, that my country is interested in this question, and we would be delighted to be able to exchange information on this important issue with OCHA.

Paragraph 4 of the letter mentions the workshop of experts, and like Ambassador Valdivieso, we are also interested in having other workshops of experts. I think that others have been announced. I would be interested in hearing more about Ambassador Eldon's experience in an earlier workshop. We would be interested in participating in upcoming workshops on this question.

**Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh): I also join other colleagues who have thanked Mr. Oshima for his briefing, and not just for his briefing, but also for the elaboration thereafter on the queries posed by the representatives of Norway, Singapore, Colombia, Ukraine and Ireland.

We are pleased with the way Mr. Oshima's office has worked on the follow-up to the June letter, and we are pleased with the progress that he has reported on the issues of the road map, the aide-memoire and closer coordination. But as the situation develops, we think that there is a sense of urgency with regard to some of the crucial problems that the Council is engaged in.

Afghanistan is very much a case in point. While we look to the comprehensive report in November, we wonder if there is some way that it could be expedited, perhaps by issuing an interim report, in order to react to the urgency of the situation in some parts of the world.

Again, with regard to Afghanistan, as the ancient Greeks used to say, you never step into the same river twice. And I take Mr. Oshima's point that every case is to a large extent specific and should be determined on its own merits. But in a situation like the one in Afghanistan, where there are so many non-State actors, as Ambassador Mahbubani has said, there is a need to bring about normative changes in the behaviour patterns of non-State actors. This was a major thrust that, in his view, should be undertaken. We in Bangladesh believe that one way to do so would be to inculcate a culture of peace in the protagonists, but this, of course, is not easy to achieve. However, would the traditional checklist that we have been thinking of be relevant to Afghanistan? Should we ask Afghanistan to change or should we have a separate checklist that is relevant to its situation, where all the protagonists are basically non-State actors?

**Mr. Kassé** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Madam President, for having organized this interactive debate with Mr. Oshima, whom we thank for his briefing. We have taken due note of the progress being made on the important issue of protecting civilians in armed conflict.

Through you, Madam, I would like to ask a question of Mr. Oshima and to make a comment. My question is, How can regional organizations that are involved in the protection of civilians — because of conflicts that are tearing apart their regions — be better involved, when the time comes, in the mechanism that is being decided on right now?

My comment is that we would have wished, like others who have evoked the participation of Security Council members, that regional organizations that are confronting conflict should be invited to participate in the workshops. We would be grateful to Mr. Oshima if he could give us written conclusions and recommendations on the work of the workshops that he referred to.

**Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius): Let me also thank Mr. Oshima for his briefing and commend him for the work which he and his team are doing in his department. We are very pleased to note that he is organizing some very important workshops on the various issues relating to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, in anticipation of the report, which we look forward to receiving next November.

We agree with the Ambassador of Colombia that the members of the Security Council could contribute positively to the work of those seminars, and we would like to be invited as and when appropriate. We have listened very carefully to some of the statements made, especially by Ambassador Eldon and by my colleague from Mali. He has very effectively raised one of the points that I had, on recommendation 14 of the Secretary-General's report of March of this year. I think that it is extremely important that there be not only coordination among the various agencies of the United Nations, but also some kind of interaction and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. Recommendation 14 does discuss that point and says we should have meetings with the regional arrangements so that there can be a more informed decision-making process, integration of additional resources, cooperation and reporting mechanisms and briefings, which would be very useful. This is one of the recommendations that we think should be followed up as quickly as possible.

We also share the concerns that have been expressed by the representative of Singapore on the lack implementation of a large number of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. In that same vein, I would like to refer in particular to the recommendation concerning the rapid deployment of peacekeeping forces. We all know that there is the greatest and heaviest loss of civilian life at the very beginning of a conflict. It is extremely important that, at that very critical phase, there should be some kind of rapid deployment to be able to protect the civilians. I note that in the recommendation made by the Secretary-General, he had talked about the possibility of setting up this kind of rapid deployment force. That same question was again reiterated during the Millennium Summit discussions.

The question that I would like to ask is the following. I know that there has been what we call here the "High Readiness Brigade", which was apparently set up with from 80 to 88 countries participating in it or expressing their readiness to do so. I also know that funds were appropriated. So the question I have is: "Has this brigade ever been deployed and, if so, where?

And what has been its impact on the overall protection of civilians in armed conflict?

**Mr. Mejdoub** (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for having scheduled this meeting between the Security Council and the Secretariat. We would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Kenzo Oshima for the excellent briefing he has just given us.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress the political aspect of the meetings that you have been organizing in recent days on the human tragedies in the world. Yesterday, we were talking about the situation of children. Today, we are talking about the situation of civilians. The extent of tragedies in conflicts in Africa, the question of refugees and the situation in the Middle East should give rise to more sacrifice and solidarity and to increased interest on the part of the Council. We have seen in some conflicts that as soon as the humanitarian element appears, it helps to resolve problems and to rally people that desire peace with justice and equity. But this meeting is a rather methodological one, aimed at strengthening dialogue between the Council and the Secretariat on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The Security Council is seeking ways to translate agreed principles into specific action, as was suggested just now by Ambassador Mahbubani and several other colleagues, to improve and even change the daily experiences of civilians that suffer the horrors of armed conflict.

I have listened with interest to the two statements made by Mr. Oshima and by my colleagues in the Council. It is clear that progress is being made by the Secretariat. We hope that the work will be completed as soon as possible in the three areas described by Mr. Oshima. We support the holding of consultations at the expert level, and we believe that they should be as broad-based and open as possible.

I do have, however, a question to put to Mr. Oshima. Could he give us some indication of the timetable planned for finalizing the initiatives that have been proposed, knowing that the Council will proceed to an evaluation next November? In other words, when do you intend to submit a draft road map and aide-memoire?

**Mr. Oshima:** A number of practical questions have been raised. First, I welcome the interest shown by many members of the Council in the possibility of our providing an interim report before the submission of the final report, which is expected in November next year. We would of course be prepared to submit at an appropriate time an interim report which would summerize all the progress that has been made so that the members of the Council could consider it and make any suggestions to the Secretariat that they might wish to make so that we could perhaps have a better, more complete and more satisfactory report in November next year. That is something that we would be prepared to consider favourably, and we of course also look to the President of the Council for guidance in this regard.

On the question of whether we would want to involve the Department of Political Affairs, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, of course we would be prepared to do so; nothing really prohibits us from doing that. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has no reservations whatsoever about engaging other departments of the Secretariat.

I mentioned the interface between OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations because there was a specific reference to it in the letter from the President of the Council to the Secretary-General. That is the only reason we made specific reference to the interface between OCHA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. As a matter of fact, as the members of the Council are aware, with regard to Afghanistan we have established within the Secretariat an Integrated Mission Task Force to address all issues that are of policy importance within that newly established framework so as to ensure a coherent response to the problems in Afghanistan. I do not see why a similar wide-ranging exercise should not be undertaken with respect to the issue under consideration.

Regarding the involvement of other parties, we would, of course, be open to — indeed, we would welcome — the participation of as many interested parties as possible, including members of the Council, and possibly some regional organizations, in workshops and other similar exercises. We would welcome that very much. As I said, we would like to make sure that invitations are extended to all parties in our future plans in this regard. As to whether a written report is available concerning the discussions which took place in the workshops that have so far been held, I would like to make sure that such a report is made available to all those who might be interested in it.

Concerning the possibility of benchmarking to indicate progress made with respect to some of the recommendations, I think there is a possibility of including some form of benchmarking, either in the aide memoire, in the process or elsewhere. Of course, it all depends on the issues. Some issues lend themselves easily to some form of benchmarking; others do not. But we take note of this very interesting suggestion, and we will see what can be done with respect to this particular concern.

A specific issue was raised concerning the United Nations High-Readiness Brigade. That is a specific mechanism that was put in place in response to the Secretary-General's call for a rapid deployment force, as mentioned by the Ambassador of Mauritius. Currently, it comprises units from several countries — units trained to the standards for deployment in operations under Chapter VI of the Charter. Whether or not this so-called High-Readiness Brigade has, in fact, been deployed, I myself am not certain at this stage. But to my knowledge — I may be incorrect about this — the brigade as such has not been deployed with respect to any specific situations.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Oshima for the clarifications that he has provided and the questions that he has answered with regard to the topic on our agenda today.

I want to thank Mr. Oshima, on behalf of the members of the Council. It is very important that this matter be kept fully under review. The interest generated in our discussion among members of the Council, as well as in our debate yesterday, clearly indicate that members of the Council, as well as non-members, see a direct link between the protection of civilians and issues relating to international peace and security. Members drew attention to the importance of developing a checklist which can be utilized with regard to specific conflict situations. In this regard, we look forward to the early interim report which Mr. Oshima indicated might be available. Clearly, these discussions on thematic issues are not an end in themselves, but are intended to assist the Security Council, the Secretariat and the other organs of the United Nations system in ensuring a better life and protection for the civilians who are the main victims of armed conflict.

Again, I thank Mr. Oshima very much for the clarifications. I am pleased that so many non-members of the Council were present to hear the discussions on this issue.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*